

Title	Rooms 2084
Type	Article
URL	<a href="https://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/id/eprint/14943/">https://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/id/eprint/14943/</a>
Date	2019
Citation	Urquhart, Robert and Horton, Ian (2019) Rooms 2084. Organizational Aesthetics, 8 (1). pp. 8-31. ISSN 2168-8575
Creators	Urquhart, Robert and Horton, Ian

### **Usage Guidelines**

Please refer to usage guidelines at <http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/policies.html> or alternatively contact [ualresearchonline@arts.ac.uk](mailto:ualresearchonline@arts.ac.uk).

License: Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives

Unless otherwise stated, copyright owned by the author

9-16-2019

## Rooms 2084


Robert Urquhart

*London College of Communication, r.urquhart@lcc.arts.ac.uk*

Ian Horton

*London College of Communication, i.horton@lcc.arts.ac.uk*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/oa>

 Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#), [Art and Design Commons](#), [Cataloging and Metadata Commons](#), and the [Scholarly Communication Commons](#)

To access supplemental content and other articles, [click here](#).

---

### Recommended Citation

Urquhart, Robert and Horton, Ian (2019) "Rooms 2084," *Organizational Aesthetics*: Vol. 8: Iss. 2, 8-31.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/oa/vol8/iss2/4>

This Special Topic is brought to you for free and open access by Digital WPI. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Organizational Aesthetics* by an authorized administrator of Digital WPI. For more information, please contact [digitalwpi@wpi.edu](mailto:digitalwpi@wpi.edu).



**Photograph**  
**Graham Goldwater**

# Rooms 2084

**Robert Urquhart**

London College of Communication,  
University of the Arts London

**Ian Horton**

London College of Communication,  
University of the Arts London

**Design by Andrew Slatter**

London College of Communication,  
University of the Arts London



VALUED



INCONSEQUENTIAL

### **Abstract**

In September 2017 Room 2084 was installed at London College of Communication (LCC) to display a selection of objects from the personal archives and collections of staff and students in the Design School during the London Design Festival.


The aim of this display was to examine the role such objects play in the research and practice of the school and how these relate to the collection policies of the institution's archives and special collections. To this end 'trials' were held throughout the durations of the show where members of staff would 'defend' their objects to a 'jury' who would determine if the items were worthy of inclusion the institution's own archive to become the focus of study in the future.

Our paper offers a reflective evaluation of the value of performing to an audience, within an exhibition setting, an archive selection procedure based on criteria set by Schellenberg and Jenkinson. Our analysis was influenced by a number of interviews, post-event, with archivists and exhibitors that took part in Room 2084. We suggest that this activity moves the theoretical debate, concerning archives, towards an arena of performance and public perception of institutional archives whilst revealing some of the difficulties and friction in archival selection processes currently in use.





PRESERVED



'Who controls the past  
controls the future: who  
controls the present  
controls the past.'

George Orwell 1984

FORGOTTEN

## Room 2084 – Knocking on the Door of Room 101

### **The Request**

In June 2017 the following information was circulated within the Design School at London College of Communication (LCC)

Time to give your archive an airing ...calling all committed collectors, amateur archivists and habitual hoarders of visual and material cultures, be it books, badges, catalogues, postcards, puppets, posters, journals, stamps, monographs, albums, audio tapes, T-shirts or tools.

We're currently looking for staff and students to exhibit a piece from their personal archive and present their selection to a jury with the aim of being included in a design archive of the future: Room 2084.

The antithesis of Orwell's Room 101, Room 2084 considers our cherished archives of the near past, present and potential futures. Throughout the course of London Design Festival we will consider how and why we preserve the past and the present for future generations. There will be a number of 'trials' throughout the duration of exhibition where a jury composed of archive staff at UAL will debate the relative merits of each submitted object before an audience, with the aim of inclusion in our Room 2084.

This seemingly innocent request would identify the kinds of objects collected within the school, determine the role these play in informing research and practice, and ultimately consider if they were worthy of inclusion in the institution's own archive. To reference one of the central notions of Orwell's *1984* this was an exercise in collective memory, as Assmann has noted 'Control of the archive is control of memory ...one epoch's trash is another one's valuable information' (2010, 344-46 quoted in Egger, 2018, 62). Of course archives are not infinite containers and since the early twentieth century the selection of items for inclusion, and considering which items to retain, has become an increasingly important aspect of archival practice, an aspect we embraced by instigating 'trials' by jury (Thylstrup, 2017).

The request resulted in twenty-two submissions from academics and PhD students in the school and librarians and technical staff across the college. Each participant provided an object representing their archive or collection, a photograph of the object and a short two hundred word statement to initiate the 'defence' of the object.

### The Court

The submitted objects ranged from badges to bird's nests and from magazines to masks, all displayed in a monochrome court at the heart of the building (Figures 1–3). Alternating stripes of dark and light grey on three sides of the court served to constrain the objects displayed on alternating angled and flat shelves. Alongside each object was a label containing the justificatory text, above each shelf was a black and white photograph of the object below stark against the wall.

On the fourth wall a raised stage contained a table and lectern behind which the owners would 'defend' their objects. Behind them emblazoned in the Futura typeface was the quotation from Orwell's *1984* 'Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.' The stark keyhole logo on the table below the quote was constructed out of the letters O and A taken from the Futura typeface and again made allusions to Orwell by playing with the notion of peering into Room 2084. Adjacent to the stage was a projected 'telescreen' endlessly replaying the 'trials' where 'defendants' justified their own collections.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1**  
**Room 2084 Installation**  
**View (Photograph**  
**Graham Goldwater)**

<sup>1</sup> Siân Cook designed the labels and the keyhole symbol. Andrew Slatter designed the quotation and frieze texts.

# ASSESSED



**Figure 2**  
Room 2084 Installation  
View (Photograph  
Graham Goldwater)



**Figure 3**  
Room 2084 Installation  
View (Photograph  
Graham Goldwater)

## **The Organising Committee<sup>1</sup>**

The Organising Committee was responsible for the administration of 'trials', the organisation of the display and the text in Futura that ran in two friezes around the upper reaches of the court.

The Lower Frieze consisted of the following words: Disorganised, Fragmented, Forgotten, Incidental, Incongruous, Inconsequential, Insignificant, Minor, Muddled, Paltry, Transient, Trivial, Undeserving, Unknown, Unopposed, Unplumbed, Unpolished, Unqualified, Unrestricted, Unsystematic, Untold. These underline the condition of objects traditionally excluded from the archive.

The Upper Frieze, in contrast, included the following words: Appraised, Assessed, Audited, Cached, Catalogued, Chronicled, Classified, Documented, Evaluated, Filed, Inspected, Investigated, Judged, Logged, Preserved, Protected, Rated, Respected, Scrutinized, Stored, Valued. These signify the state of objects that cross the divide into the eternal embrace of the archive.

The words selected drew attention to the archival process emphasising the fact that '...the moveable and indeed unfixable borderline between value and worthlessness, between cultural waste and the cultural archive, is the effect of continuous decisions and negotiations' (Assmann, 2011, 379 quoted in Ahmed and Crucifix, 2018, 6).

## **The Jury<sup>2</sup>**

Positioned on the balcony above the friezes a team of archivists, acting as both jury and collective judge, presided over the five 'trials' that determined the fate of the objects on display. According to Cook

Appraisal is the critical archival task by archivists... As archivists appraise records, they are determining what the future will know about its past: who will have a continuing voice and who will be silenced... Underlying these stereotypes and mythologies was an earnest quest, by archivists and historians alike, for objectivity, for impartiality, for Truth, all extolled as self-defining professional virtues, but alas in reality, all an impossible dream in light of the inescapable subjectivity that any value-creating and value-enforcing activity such as archival appraisal must entail (2009, xv-xvi).

So what kind of jurists appraised and enforced the Truth of Room 2084? They were principally representatives of the institution's own archives which are primarily devoted to the preservation of art and design objects. Therefore the objects submitted to Room 2084 were most likely to be admitted if they aligned with existing holdings and this archival impulse to specialisation potentially risked excluding those items that might be most valuable in the future.

## **The Judgement**

Of the twenty-two objects submitted and displayed only ten were admitted to the fictional archive of Room 2084 and twelve were rejected. The factors leading to rejection were often disciplinary with a Heuer watch, a Chinese mask and a bird's nest being refused because they did not directly connect with the institutional archives. Other objects such as condom packets promoting safe sex and a stock photographic image were declined because there are more suitable institutional repositories for them. One item, a specialist magazine, was eliminated because it was already held in the university library collection, but it could potentially belong in the archive and its exclusion highlighted the tension between these different institutional repositories.

---

1 The Organising Committee consisted of Siân Cook, Sara Ekenger, Ian Horton, Nela Milic, Andrew Slatter, Robert Urquhart.

2 The jury consisted of Sara Mahurter (Archives and Special Collections Manager), Richard Daniels (Senior Archivist UAL), Jaqueline Winston-Silk (Archivist UAL), Georgina Orgill (Archivist UAL), Kristin Hall (BA (Hons) Design Management and Cultures Alumni) and Tito Magrini (Independent Archivist).

# AUDITED

Of the ten objects accepted into Room 2084 five were print-based. Two of these, a magazine by the Dutch graphic design studio Hard Werken and a prospectus for Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication, related directly to the graphic design heritage of LCC and significant holdings of similar work already in the archive. A further two items, a Sex Pistols badge and a counter-cultural magazine connected to the fanzines in the archive while an American comic book from the 1930s linked to the extensive existing comic book collections.

Many of the objects submitted to Room 2084, both accepted and rejected, were produced by anonymous creators. In his examination of Edward Fuchs early 20th century collections of caricature and erotic art Walter Benjamin concluded that

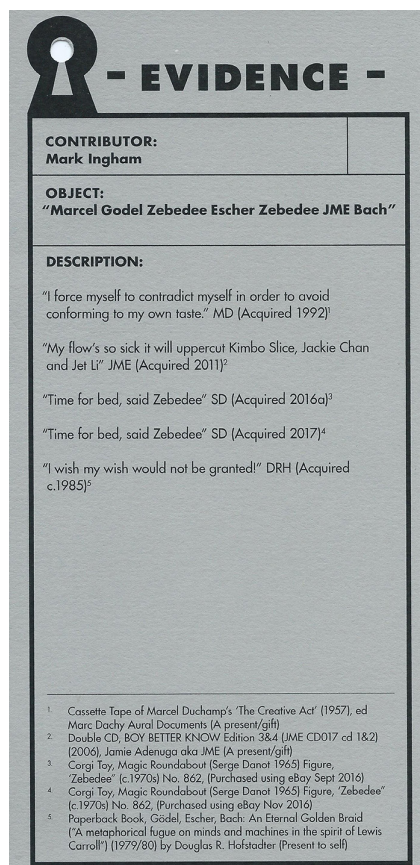
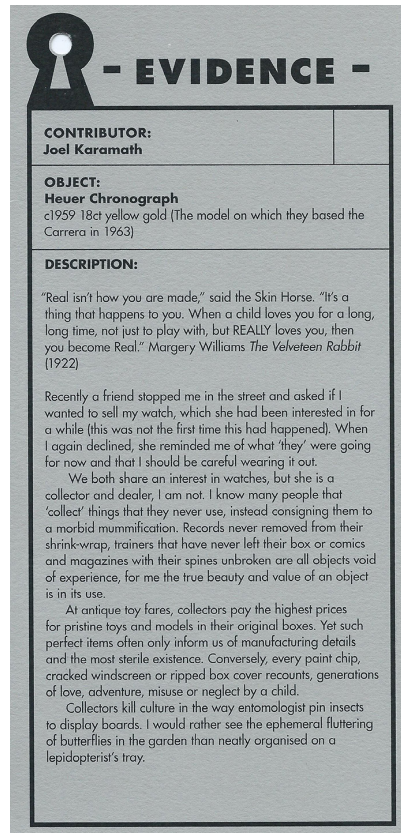
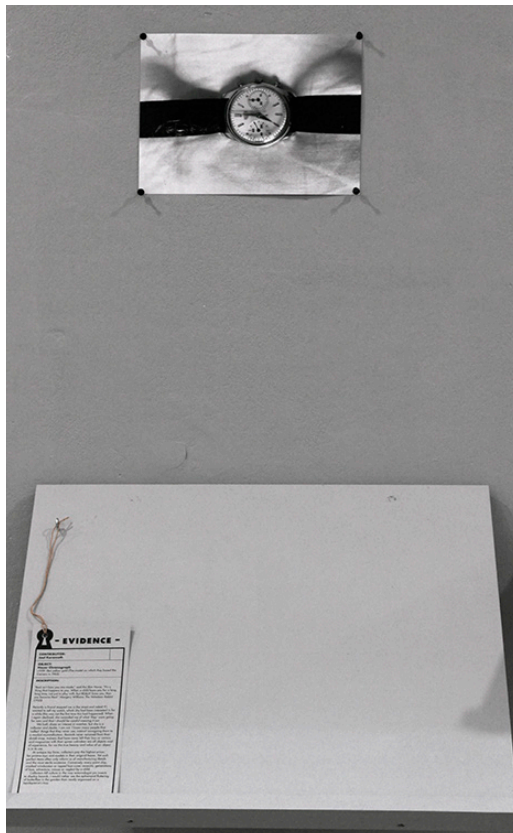
Whether devoting such attention to anonymous artists and to the objects that have preserved the traces of their hands would not contribute more to the humanization of mankind than the cult of the leader – a cult which, it seems, is to be inflicted on humanity once again – is something that, like so much else that the past has vainly striven to teach us, must be decided, over and over by the future (1937, 143).

Clearly the archival holdings of the institution already celebrate the work of anonymous creators but what of our future collections? In an increasingly digital environment the archive of the future will see changes to the gatekeeping role of archivists and an increasing engagement with ‘...citizen archivists, passionate amateurs and communities of enthusiasts’ (Theimer, 2018, 14). The resulting collective memories might result in a more egalitarian form of archival practice but there will always be someone in control of the present who shapes our understanding of the past.

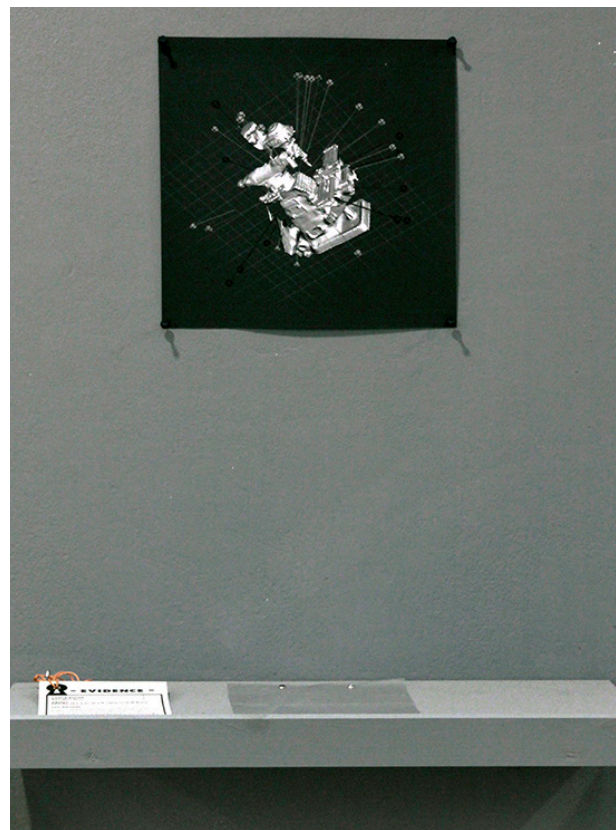
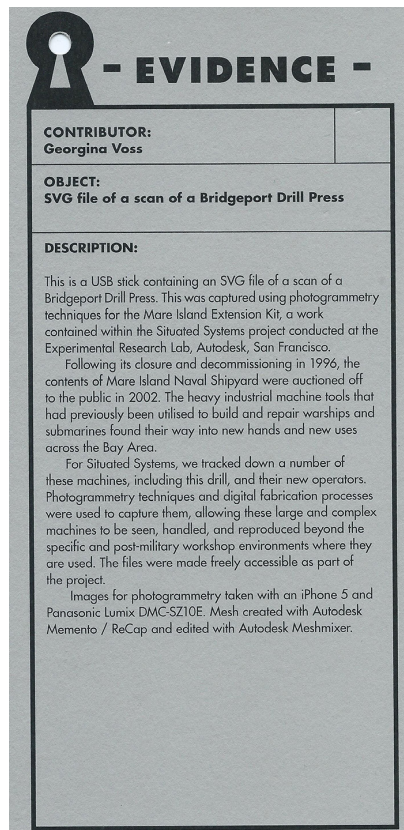
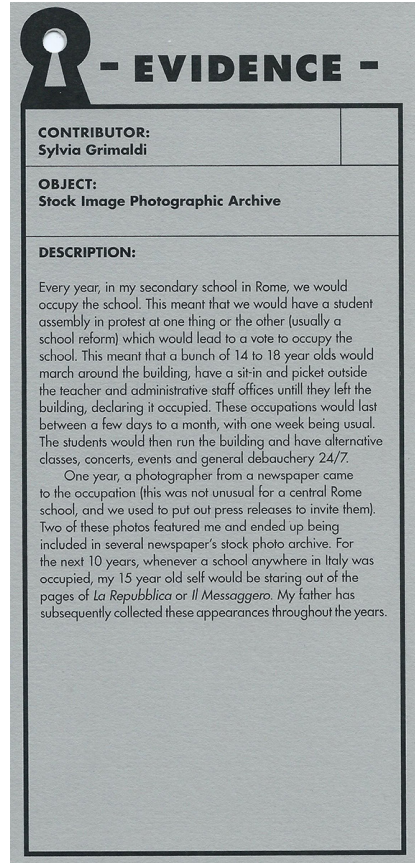
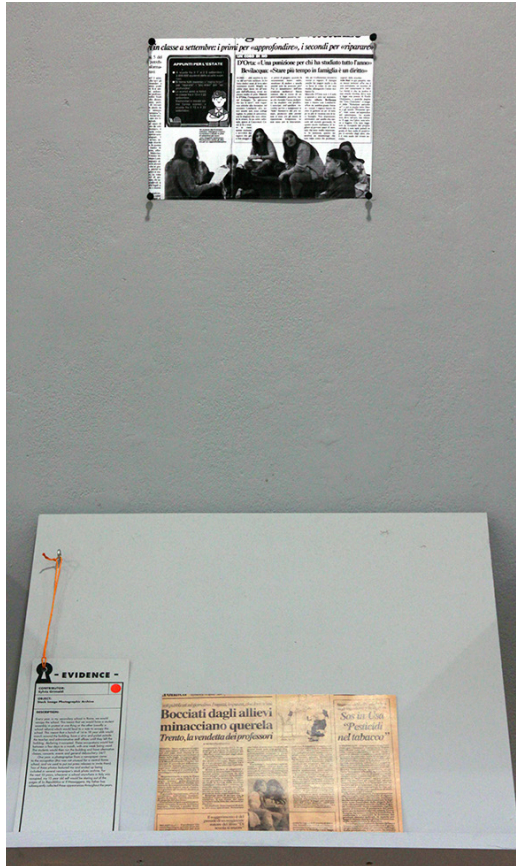
## **Room 2084 - The Evidence**

The images on the following pages are photographs of the exhibits and their corresponding labels.

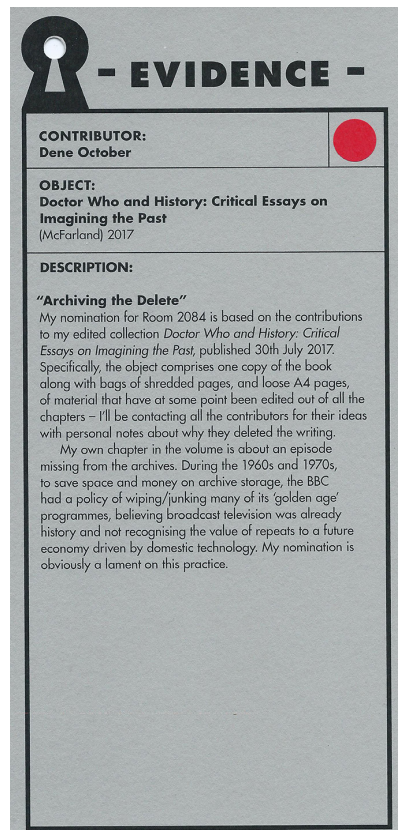
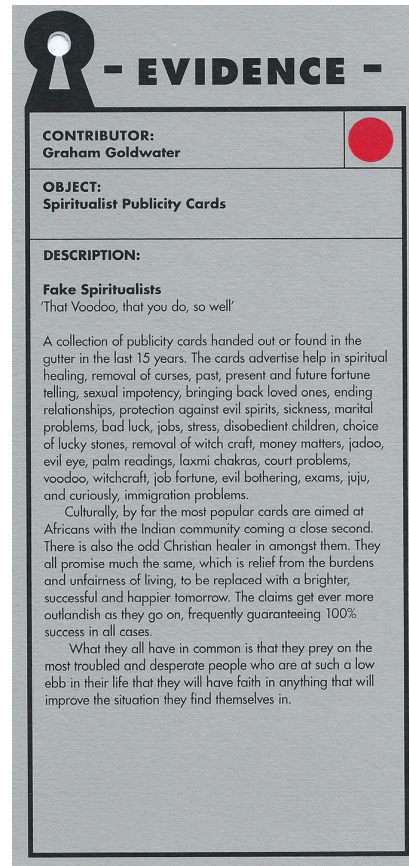
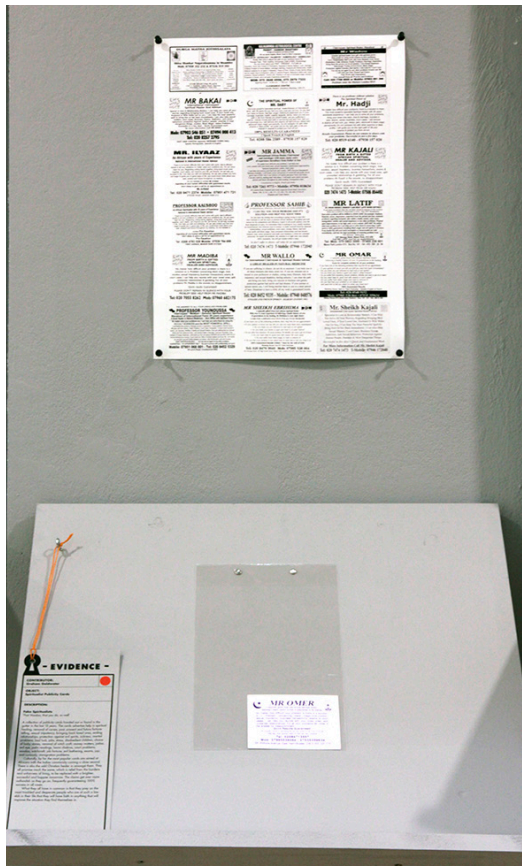




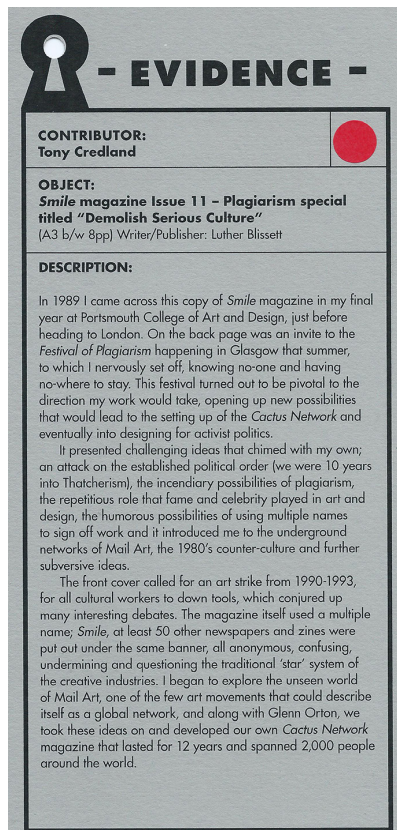
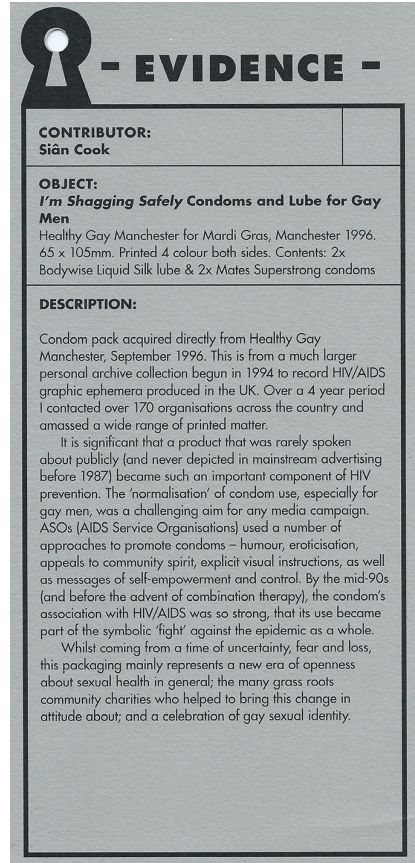


















**- EVIDENCE -**

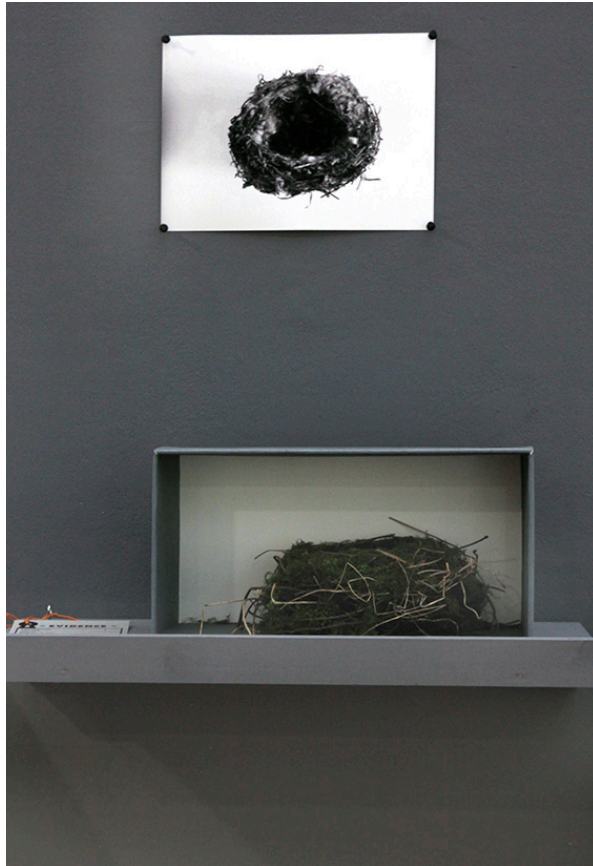
<b>CONTRIBUTOR:</b> Sara Ekenger	
<b>OBJECT:</b> <b>Kui Xing (K'uei Hsing 魁星), the God of Literature, Examinations &amp; Bureaucracy</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b> <p>This mask is part of a collection of masks acquired through my travels and life abroad; it includes masks from Asia, Europe, Oceania, Africa, and South America. My interest in masks is cultural, theatrical and craft-based. Masks are fascinating objects both for what they hide and reveal and the stories they represent.</p> <p>This mask was given to me in 2010. It is a carved wood mask depicting Kui Xing (K'uei Hsing 魁星), a Chinese Taoist/Daoist deity representing the God of Literature, Examinations &amp; Bureaucracy. The type of wood and its precise origin and date are unknown, but can often be traced to the Guanzhou, Fujian province area of China known for wood carving.</p> <p>Legend has it that Kui Xing was a gifted scholar and scored the highest marks on the Imperial Examinations. Usually such achievements would be rewarded by the Emperor, however Kui Xing was unfortunately a very ugly, handicapped dwarf and his appearance shocked the Emperor to such a degree that he refused to reward him. Desperately upset that he had repulsed the Emperor and angry that he had not received his award, Kui Xing leaped off a high cliff into turbulent waters but was saved by a sea dragon and escorted to the Heavens where he was appointed as the god of official documents and imperial exams. At the moment this mask hangs outside in the garden, as my 5-year-old son finds it too scary and doesn't want it inside.</p>	


**- EVIDENCE -**

<b>CONTRIBUTOR:</b> Russ Bestley	
<b>OBJECT:</b> <b>The Medium Was Tedium/Don't Back The Front</b> Desperate Bicycles seven inch single, released July 1977	
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b> <p>I acquired this single sometime in the 1980s in a small collectors record shop in Hanway Street, London, since it was, and remains, a recognised classic do-it-yourself punk record. Desperate Bicycles released their debut single, <i>Smokescreen/Handlebars</i>, on their own Refill label in April 1977, with both songs pressed on each side of the record, due to the proscription cost of cutting a master for both sides. The record run-out features a sole shouted voice – "it was easy, it was cheap, go and do it!". The first pressing sold out within four months, resulting in a profit of £210. Using this money, a second pressing of 1,000 was made, which sold out in a fortnight. The profit from that was used to finance their second release, <i>The Medium Was Tedium/Don't Back The Front</i> in July 1977. Again, both tracks were pressed on each side of the record, and the words "it was easy, it was cheap, go and do it!" form the chorus of the first song. "So if you can understand / Go and join a band. It was easy, it was cheap, go and do it!"</p>	







**- EVIDENCE -**

**CONTRIBUTOR:**  
John Fass

**OBJECT:**  
Song Thrush Nest

**DESCRIPTION:**

**Passerine intent**  
This is the nest of a song thrush. Unusually built by the female who constructs it in three weeks. The nest is made of moss, mud, straw and twigs. The centre of the nest is very smooth, of mud or dung mixed with saliva so as to hold and protect the bird's bright blue eggs. This nest is part of a modest collection of abandoned bird's nests that ranges from those of tiny goldfinches made of feathers, cotton and straw to the larger twig constructions of blackbirds.

The sculptural qualities of bird's nests, their overall shape, size, depth and range of materials contribute to the powerful sense of an avian aesthetic. Nests are specific to particular species – the size of their eggs, their immediate habitat and size of brood partly determine the shape of the nest. The process of making them is highly emergent in the sense that nesting materials appear to be carefully chosen. Even within species, nest design will vary depending on latitude and rainfall levels. So we can ask: is this design?

Recent work in ecology and evolution would tend towards the answer yes. The cognitive abilities required to build a nest include disguising them from predators, avoiding parasites, and providing a microclimate for egg insulation. Nest design is also thought to be a powerful phenotypic signal – indicating an individual's genetic fitness through optimum use of materials. In other words, the way a nest is built is decidedly non random.

If birds do design their nests by responding to local conditions and creating a well adapted micro-habitat, then they should be included in a design-oriented collection. What then could we learn from them? How might human-centric design develop similar responsiveness to environment? And, what strategies for survival might the material conditions of bird's nests reveal?

**- EVIDENCE -**

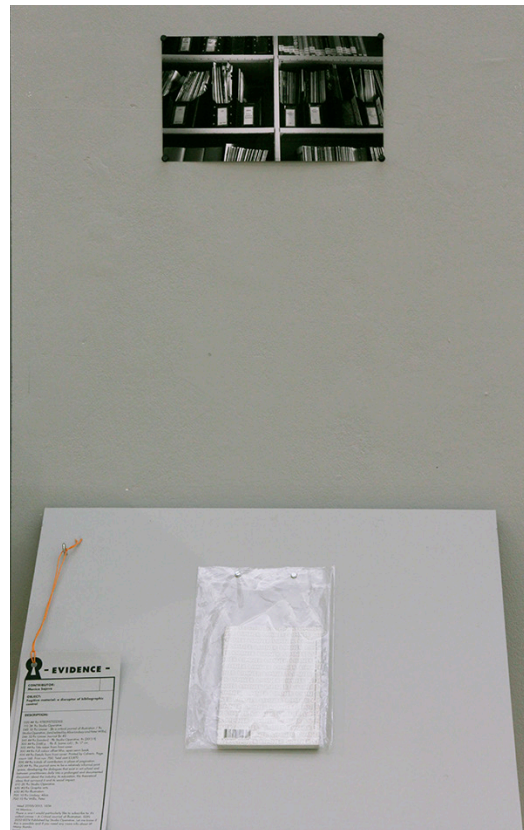
**CONTRIBUTOR:**  
Monica Sajeva

**OBJECT:**  
Fugitive material: a disruptor of bibliographic control

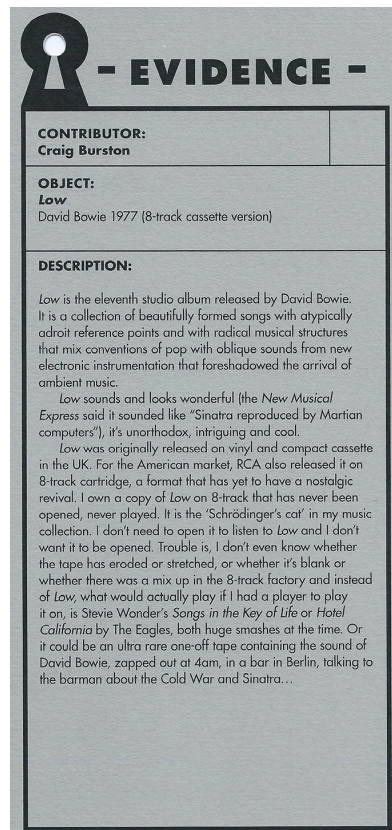
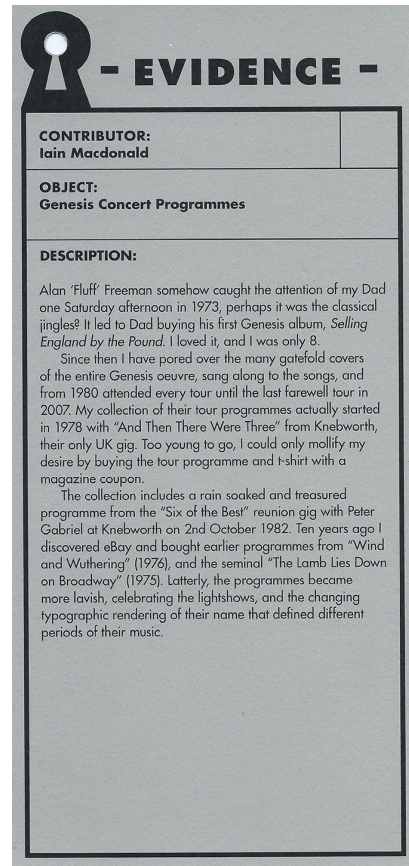
**DESCRIPTION:**

020 ## #a 9780957522305.  
110 2# #a Studio Operative.  
245 10 #a Linner : \$b a critical journal of illustration / #c Studio Operative ; [and edited by Alice Lindsay and Peter Willis].  
246 32 #a Linner Journal \$n #2  
260 ## #a [London] : #b Studio Operative, #c [2013 ?].  
300 ## #a [168] p. : #b ill. (some col.) ; #c 17 cm.  
500 ## #a Title taken from front cover.  
500 ## #a Full colour offset litho, open-sewn book.  
500 ## #a Details from front cover: Printed by Calverts. Page count 168. Print run: 700. Total cost £3,870.  
500 ## #a Initials of contributors in place of pagination.  
520 ## #a The journal aims to be a relatively informal print space, developing the dialogues that exist in art school and between practitioners daily into a prolonged and documented discussion about the industry, its education, the theoretical ideas that surround it and its social impact.  
610 20 #a Studio Operative.  
650 #0 #a Graphic arts.  
650 #0 #a Illustration.  
700 10 #a Lindsay, Alice.  
700 10 #a Willis, Peter.

Wed 27/05/2015, 1036  
Hi Monica,  
There is one I would particularly like to subscribe to: it's called Linner – A Critical Journal of Illustration. ISSN 2052-8574 Published by Studio Operative. Let me know if this is possible and if you need any more info about it?  
Many thanks  
Lizzie  
Course Leader MA Illustration & Visual Media

















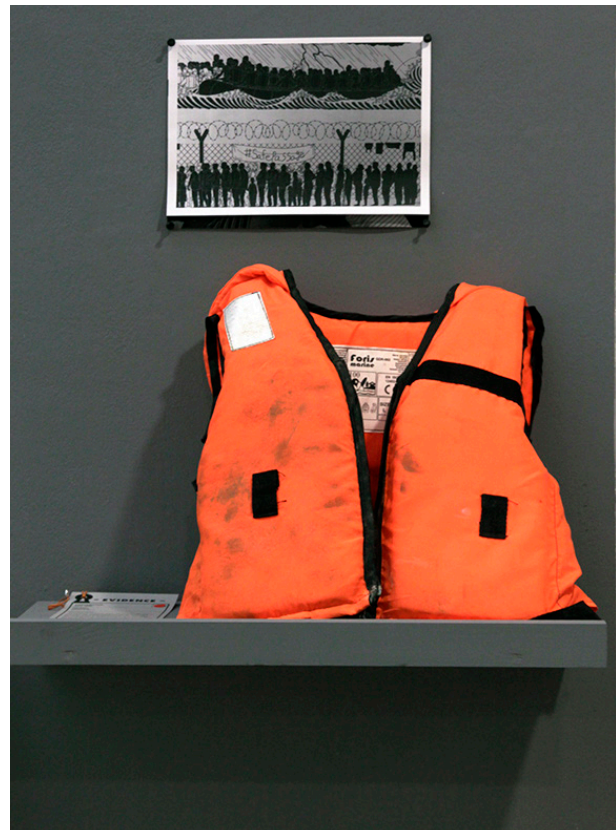
## - EVIDENCE -

<b>CONTRIBUTOR:</b> Ian Hague	
<b>OBJECT:</b> <i>Fantastic Four/Silver Surfer: The Complete Collection</i> Graphic Imaging Technology Inc., 2007. DVD-ROM	
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b> <p>This is a digital collection of more than 750 <i>Fantastic Four</i> and <i>Silver Surfer</i> comics published by Marvel Comics between 1961 and 2006. It includes numerous historically important examples of the comics form, including major and influential works by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee that laid the groundwork for what is now known as the 'Marvel Universe'. The comics included on the disc are produced from scans of the original printed comics, and so include full paratextual materials such as adverts, letters pages and editorial materials, which are usually omitted from reprints but are valuable resources for scholars.</p> <p>In addition to its content, the object itself is significant: it is one example of a range published by Graphic Imaging Technology, Inc. (GITCorp) in the mid-2000s that offered consumers massive collections of comics at relatively low costs. Unfortunately, GITCorp no longer produces these collections, with Marvel offering digital comics through its own platform (Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited) and third party retailers (Comixology). This collection represents an early example of digital comics in a format that has not persisted; for this reason, it is an artefact of interest to comics scholars and historians of digital culture alike.</p>	

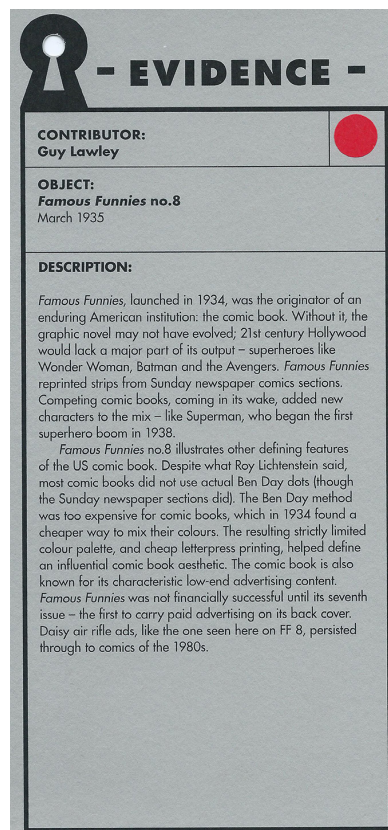
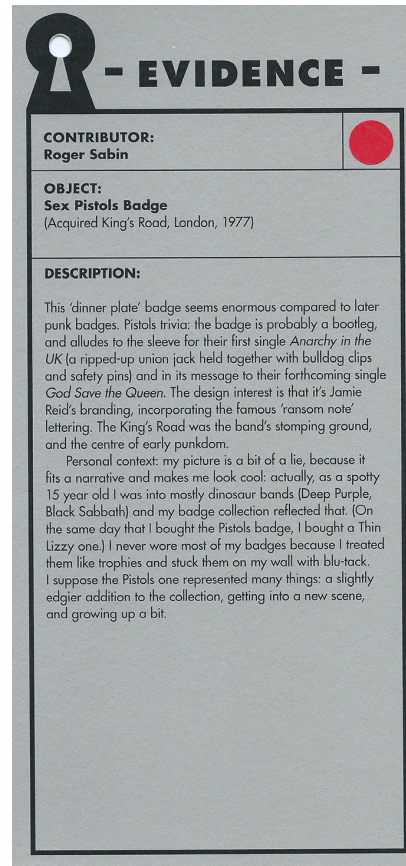
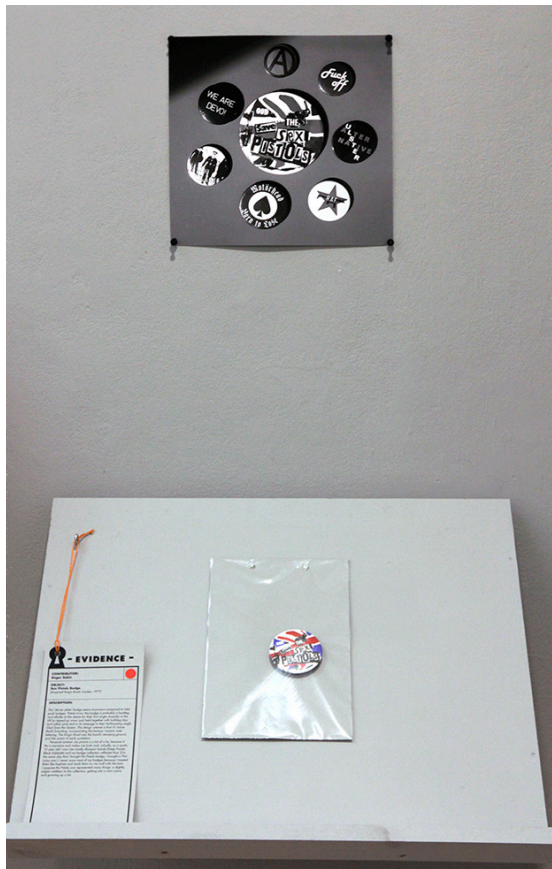


## - EVIDENCE -

<b>CONTRIBUTOR:</b> Nela Milic	
<b>OBJECT:</b> <i>Lifejacket</i> (Acquired 2017)	
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b> <p>Migration has marked our times. We have not seen such unprecedented movement of the peoples in Europe since the end of the 19th century and we are viewing it on a daily basis over various media platforms and often even live. The Mediterranean is carrying refugees and migrants from different continents to Europe, troubling the concept of the West, nationhood, EU, all of which are in the presence of "the others" becoming uncertain. Their perilous journey is also uncertain and for many, depends on one object – a lifejacket. This safety accompaniment to anyone who travels in the West is frequently checked for its quality and fitness for purpose. It is not so for the migrants and refugees, herded onto the overcrowded boats. The ones who make it carrying the jacket, also carry stories of war, hardship, hope and the jacket embodies them all. It is therefore, a symbol of our times.</p>	











## - EVIDENCE -

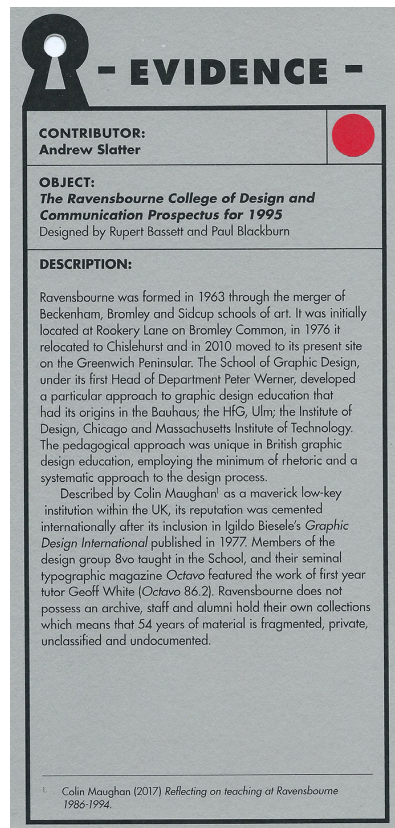
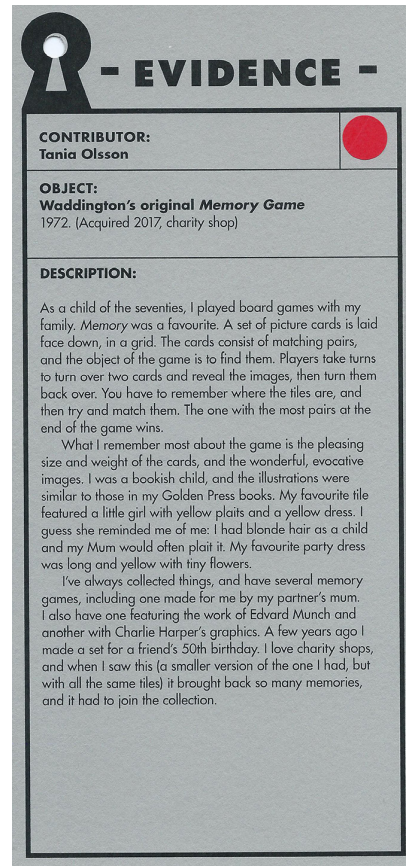
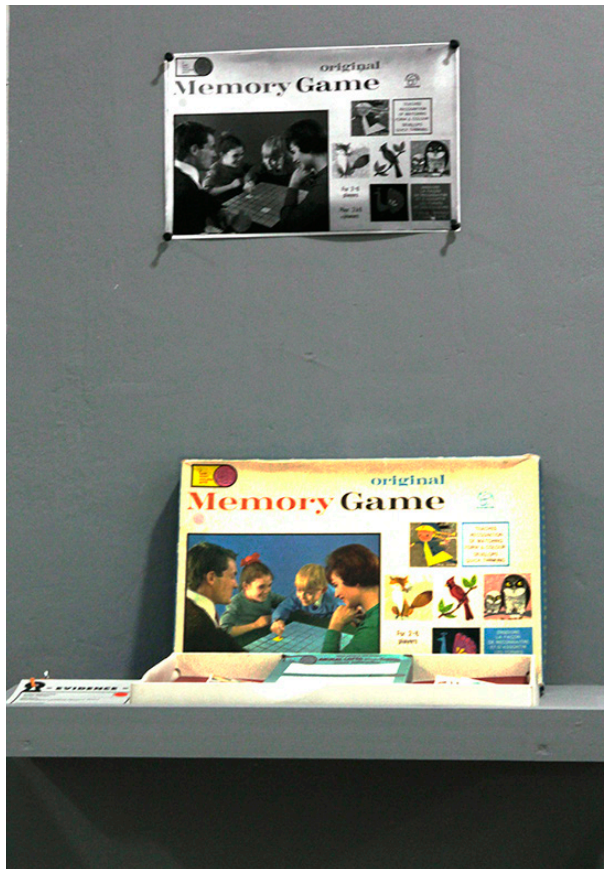
<b>CONTRIBUTOR:</b> Paul Glavey	
<b>OBJECT:</b> 35mm Slides	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION:</b></p> <p>My collection of slides is part of a bigger collection of photograph albums, individual images and negatives I've collected over the past 15 years. I have found these in various flea markets, car boot sales and eBay sale lots in the UK, Europe and from the US.</p> <p>There is a certain excitement with the 'lucky dip' element of buying these lots. Beyond a general idea of the subject matter or the general age you have the pleasure of discovering the contents as you go through the images one by one. Usually they skew heavily to general domestic subjects; family, holidays, birthdays etc. But you can also find threads of personal interest and preoccupation through the collections; collections within the collections like a person who has photographed their dogs across years, or someone who documented the flowers in their garden across decades.</p> <p>It is these kinds of personal stories or preoccupations that I find most interesting. These images which took time and money to make and accumulate show the effort and interest people have in their subjects and sits in contrasts to the way these collections are found in estate sales, or on car boot tables. They are removed from their makers and make you wonder about how they came to be there. There is an undercurrent of sadness to the way they have ended up orphaned and sold off; the possibilities of their stories intrigue me. It is a small attempt to 'save' and keep these collections which at one time meant something to someone but are now lost to them.</p>	

## - EVIDENCE -

<b>CONTRIBUTOR:</b> Ian Horton	
<p><b>OBJECT:</b> <i>Hard Werken/Wild Plakken</i> Lecturis No.11 1981 (Acquired 2014)</p>	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION:</b></p> <p>For the past three years I have been researching the Rotterdam-based graphic design studio Hard Werken, best known for the 10 issues of the eponymous cultural magazine <i>Hard Werken</i> published in the Netherlands between 1979 and 1982. There are no archival resources relating to Hard Werken in the UK and initially I had to rely on the kindness of British and Dutch collectors for access to the magazines and ultimately spent time in the Rotterdam City Archives looking at Hard Werken's extensive designs for book covers, exhibitions, magazines, posters and the theatre. Through this process I began to realise the value placed on graphic design in the Netherlands and this highlighted the relative paucity of archival sources for the graphic design historian in the UK.</p> <p>When interviewing the members of Hard Werken they began to loan and gift materials to assist with the research process. One of the earliest gifts was a signed copy of a pamphlet, edited by Wim Crouwel and published by the print firm Lecturis, which contrasts Hard Werken with Wild Plakken, a more politically motivated Dutch design collective. The cover image by Hard Werken, specially commissioned for this publication, is a striking example of their Staged Photography and thirty-five years later still captivates and intrigues the viewer.</p> <p>The supporting photograph shows all of the other objects given as souvenirs by Hard Werken and the resulting collection provides a personal and particular snapshot of their design practice.</p>	









# SCRUTINIZED

## Room 2084 – How to Weaponise Archivists and put our Colleagues in an Archive Fever

**Memories from Room 2084, London College of Communication (LCC), University of the Arts London, September 2017<sup>1</sup>**

Were we adding anything to Fleming's *Artefact Study: A Proposed Model* as discussed by R. Elliot et al (1983) cited in Pearce (1994) by living it out in a 'live' performative environment? At the very least, on the nights of the trials, it would appear that the audience sat squarely with the 'information supporting the artefact' in Fleming's model (1974). As it happens, our archivists chose to spar with Sir Hilary Jenkinson and Theodore R. Schellenberg's methodologies on archival procedure, by using their classification techniques in deciding whether or not contributors to the exhibition made the 'archive', or not.

The choice of these two famous adversaries, with Schellenberg on the side of researchers whilst Jenkinson busied himself with the technical fundamentals of archival procedure, could be taken as the age-old struggle between fusty bureaucracy and innovation that institutions often find themselves caught up in. However, it's what unites Schellenberg and Jenkinson that is more pertinent to this exercise. Both believed that archives are accumulated as part of our day-to-day work: Natural accumulation is part of our business as academics. What place does this have within an institutional archive? As Fleming noted, an archive assists with our process of self-realisation, again, something that rings true, when we consider the impact an archive has on status and understanding for an educational institution.

---

<sup>1</sup> Editorial decisions, by the author, to include the opinions of selected contributors to Room 2084 in this article were based on the following rationale: Tito Magrini, as an external to UAL, archivist who was a judge throughout the performances and was therefore able to give an overview of the entire exhibition. Jacqueline Winston-Silk as an internal UAL Curator of Archives & Special Collections Centre at LCC and judge for one performance. Dr Mark Ingham as a detractor and vocal critic of the exhibition, Graham Goldwater as someone surprised that his ephemera was worthy of inclusion and Siân Cook as a dedicated collector of HIV/Aids ephemera and as an exhibitor who had their collection turned away by the panel.

We aimed to create an antithesis of Orwell's Room 101, Room 2084. Instead we created our very own Ministry of Love. We thought it would be a cuddly Desert Island Discs affair. Cheekily, perhaps it was our collective senescence that brought the dust down from the attic: Were we inadvertently creating a death drive? Were we suffering from Archive Fever? (Derrida, 1995).

Perhaps our executioners block was the number of 'trials' throughout the duration of the exhibition, where a jury composed of members of the archive/ staff at UAL and student alumni debated the relative merits of each submitted object before an audience.

As one of the judges, Tito Magrini, Archivist at the DACS Foundation Art 360, recalls

From what I remember, it felt like a blown-up characterisation of the archival practice, an exaggeration of power and nonsense in the old-fashioned way. A despot decreeing the laws of the archival realm. We, the judges, passed the archival principles and measured them against the proposed collections. A playful farce without consequences and responsibilities (Urquhart, 2019).

Did we, the audience, at the performance, run in the opposite direction to R. Elliot et al (1983) and discard our preconceived notions about the artefact and instead focus on the artefact itself? The descriptions of the objects under the hammer were all clearly on display. We had ample time to view both the object and understand its origin, meaning, provenance et al. However, we were swayed by the majesty of the judging panel, who were positioned 'in the gods' of the performance, some 25ft. in the air, on a balcony.

## **Zimbardo Fever**

Was this really a 'playful farce?' Or was it some kind of Zimbardo Stanford Prison Study (1971) played out? The comparison, here, to the famed social psychology experiment is a light-hearted one. Our prison guards were the archivists, our exhibitors, the prisoners. The release into the 'archive' was negotiated. By physically placing archivists aloft, allowing them to collude, were we allowing our archivists to bend the social norms of their positions? Did we inadvertently compromise their objectivity with newly perceived authority?

Dr Mark Ingham, Teaching and Learning Academic Lead for the Design School and participant notes

The question was of exclusion and exclusivity and who judged the judges and the judging. Who was in the club of the archive and who was 'black' balled. The process reminded me of Animal Farm and the creation of a hierarchy that resembled what the initial revolt was against. The game of who was in and who was out was arbitrary and gave power to the judges that I think was abused, as often is the case when you give someone that power. The irony for me is that it fell into the trap of 1984 which meant that thought was controlled by a big brother process (Urquhart, 2019)

A bird's nest, an 8-track recording of Bowie's *Low* album, a refugee lifejacket, all earnestly raised aloft. How did other participants in Room 2084 take to the floor? How did they find the experience of defending and justifying their object and rationale for collecting?

Senior Lecturer at LCC, Siân Cook, whose HIV/AIDS collection of awareness paraphernalia did not make it into the 'archive'; responds that the experience was

...Interesting, because I have not directly defended it to the 'academic' design community before. The audiences I have mainly presented the project to have been in the HIV/AIDS or health promotion/charity sector. It therefore brought my passion (and more emotional motivations) for the subject back to the fore (Urquhart, 2019).

Whilst Graham Goldwater, technician at LCC, whose collection of Fake Spiritualist cards also made the 'archive' notes

I have to admit that I did feel rather pumped up at the idea of getting my objet -trouve into the archive. I had been collecting them for ages and felt that this was their time to step out of the drawer and be recognised, I felt responsible for pleading their case and making sure that they got the recognition that they deserved (Urquhart, 2019)

Magrini sums up the offerings for Room 2084:

Most of the submitted examples reflected the professional life of the collectors; some form of printed record and its design, ideal candidates for collections. There were also some objects in the mix which seemed more about throwing the spanner in the machine, interrogations on the archival practice, I found them problematic objects because they fitted more in a museum rather than archives, they required a museological approach. Overall the submitted records stood more on the collection side, there was a certain intentionality and incompleteness in the submissions that as a matter of fact defy the archive. I see collections as driftwood hazardedly gathered together, whereas the Archive pulls together, re-form the lost origin and wholeness. (2019)

Ingham takes a more direct method of response "As Gilles Deleuze (1980) exclaims, 'A concept is a brick. It can be used to build a courthouse of reason' (the archive). Or it can be thrown through the window.' (Which is what I wanted to do!) (Urquhart, 2019).

What is performance without sentiment and emotion? Perhaps we were only viewing a snippet of someone's collection but, rooted together, our exhibition became an archive of sorts?

Magrini takes up the point by playing with a quote by Terry Cook (2011),

'We are what we keep; We keep what we are'. I have experienced through my work that it is more appropriate for archives created by individuals to use the expression: 'We are what we don't keep, we keep what we are comfortable with'. Archives tend to document feats of achievements; that specific battle was won and that award was received, glorious facts after facts. I would like to see archives that document the inner self rather than surface activities. Archives that reflect the subjective private self, the fragility of human nature. Archival theory was developed around archival qualities like authenticity, accountability, transactionality and evidentiality. Sentiment and emotions are considered manipulative, unreliable and fallible, the enemies of the objective impartial truth (Urquhart, 2019).

## **Doublespeak**

Why use Jenkinson and Schellenberg as guiding lights for judgement in a performative exhibition that touches on dystopia whilst light-heartedly sneaking a peek inside the dusty drawers of academics? Do we have Archive Fever? Are our archives and collections death drives? So many questions...

As Stapleton notes in his essay entitled *Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison*, both Jenkinson and Schellenberg agreed on at least one point, banishing the word 'collection' stressed by Jenkinson (1947) in *The English Archivist: A New Profession* and backed up by Schellenberg (1956) in an article entitled *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (cited in Stapleton 1983).

Jacqueline Winston-Silk, Curator of Archives & Special Collections Centre, University of the Arts London sums up the institutional response to it all:

By its nature, an archive is acquired and preserved as a whole. Its integrity comes through its completeness (and in retaining its original order), as a record of a person/organisations activities. An archive is formed as a by-product of a person's or organisation's usual activities (in essence, an archive is created 'organically' (for want of a better word). By comparison, a collection (as opposed to an archive) is formed through the deliberate act of choosing and collecting. Selecting interesting things which reflect a person/institutions passion or mission, and research interests. Items in a collection are

# JUDGED

brought together for the purpose of creating a collection, for example to illustrate a specific type of object, or perhaps to illustrate a people or place (Urquhart, 2019).

In the eyes of the institution our offering: a collection, an exhibition to illustrate the acquisition, accession, and documentation of collections that seek an archive. The process of which is born, perhaps from an Archive Fever of sorts.

The gavel has fallen and the court is closed. The archive is archived and Room 2084, no more. Whilst the memory and emotions of the exhibition may have dimmed, our archive from Room 2084 remains, caught on film. Therefore, we may conclude with the final words of George Orwell in 1984, 'The voice from the telescreen was still pouring forth its tale of prisoners and booty and slaughter, but the shouting outside had died down a little...'

# INSIGNIFICANT

## References

- Ahmed, M. And Crucifix, B. (eds.) (2018) *Comics Memory: Archives and Styles*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Assmann, A. (2010) *Erinnerungsräume*. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- Assmann, A. (2011) *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Benjamin, W. (1937) 'Edward Fuchs Collector and Historian' in Jennings M. W., Doherty, B. And Levin, T. Y. (2008) *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*. Cambridge Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press.
- Brown, C. (2018) *Archival Futures*. London: Facet Publishing.
- Cook, T. (2009) 'Preface' in Ridener, J. (2009) *From Polders to postmodernism: a concise history of archival theory*. Minn.: Litwin Books.
- Cook, T. (2011). 'We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are': *Archival Appraisal Past, Present and Future*. *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 32(2), pp.173-189.
- Derrida, J. and Prenowitz, E. (1995). Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression. *Diacritics*, [online] 25(2), p.9. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/465144> . [Accessed 17 Mar. 2019].
- Egger, B. 'Archives and Oral History in Emmanuel Guibert's *Le Photographe*' in Ahmed, M. And Crucifix, B. (eds.) (2018) *Comics Memory: Archives and Styles*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- R. Elliot et al (1983) 'Towards a Material History Methodology' in Pearce, S. (1994). *Interpreting Objects and Collections*. [ebook] Masaryk University, pp.109-124. Available at: <https://is.muni.cz/el/1423jaro2013/SAN105/um/39543819/> [Accessed 3 Mar. 2019].
- Hofstadter, D. (1990). *Godel, Escher, Bach*. New York, NY: Basic Books, pp.285-311.
- Orwell, G. (1949). 1984. Penguin.
- Stapleton, R. (1983). *Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison*. *Archivaria*, The Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists, [online] 17. Available at: <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/viewFile/11021/11956> [Accessed 6 Mar. 2019].
- Theimer, K (2018) 'Its the end of the archival profession as we know it, and I feel fine' in Brown, C. (2018) *Archival Futures*. London: Facet Publishing.
- Thylstrup, N. B. 'What the Archive can't Contain' in Dekker A. (ed.) (2017) *Lost and living (in) archives: collectively shaping new memories*. Amsterdam : Valiz.
- Urquhart, R. (2019). *Quick Recollections of Room 2084*. [Email interviews with contributors to Room 2084 and archivists who judged the events].
- Zimbardo, P. (1973). *On the ethics of intervention in human psychological research: With special reference to the Stanford prison experiment*. *Cognition*, [online] 2(2), pp.243-256. Available at: <http://heatherlench.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/zimbardo.pdf> [Accessed 4 Mar. 2019].

**RESPECTED****UNOPOSED**

## About the Authors

**Robert Urquhart** is a lecturer in Design Management at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. Robert is also a contributing editor to the international contemporary art and visual culture magazine Elephant.

His writing has featured in numerous publications, on a regular basis, for Grafik, Etapes, Communication Arts, Dazed & Confused, IdN and Computer Arts. Besides working as a design journalist, he also works as a freelance strategist, helping to create the narrative for concepts.

His present research is focused on the relationship between creativity and the environment. Before working as a writer and educator he worked in children's TV, ran an art gallery and worked in research for broadcast production.

**Ian Horton** is Reader in Graphic Communication at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. His present research is focused in three related areas: comic books, graphic design and illustration and he has previously published work on: oral history and text-based public art; colonialist stereotypes in European and British comic books; the relationship between art history and comics studies; public relations and comic books.

His book *Hard Werken: One for All (Graphic Art & Design 1979–1994)* [co-authored with Bettina Furnee] is the first academic study of this influential avant-garde Dutch graphic design studio and was published by Valiz in 2018. In 2014, along with Lydia Wysocki (Applied Comics Etc) and John Swogger (archaeological illustrator and comic book artist), he founded the Applied Comics Network. He is a founder member of the Comics Research Hub (CoRH) at the University of the Arts London, co-editor of *Contexts of Violence in Comics* (Routledge 2019) and *Representing Acts of Violence in Comics* (Routledge 2019) and is associate editor of the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*.